

## REVIEWS

## DINNER AND A MOVIE: "RATATOUILLE" AND MAI THAI

## Layering on the flavors

Mai Thai, near Oak View Mall, pays attention to all the details

By NICHOLE AKSAMIT  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

A bit of expertly carved carrot caught my eye at Mai Thai.

Complete with wispy wings and antennae, the delicate orange creature perched near a radish rose on a plate of spring rolls.

And the skill and care that led it there — as a garnish on a \$5.50 appetizer — make it a fitting symbol for the new Thai restaurant northwest of Oak View Mall.

On two recent visits, the food, service and ambience at Mai Thai were every bit as delightful and detailed as that carrot butterfly.

The place itself is cozy and comfortable — a small strip-mall cubby with red-painted walls, reclining Eastern sculptures near the entrance, woven Thai silk hangings on the north, a long banquette along the south, tables to seat about 40 and center-tied gold and red curtains that soften the unavoidable parking lot view.

The service was gracious, knowledgeable and anticipatory: Water, refills, to-go boxes and the check (with Andes mints, to boot) all came without our asking.

The prices were reasonable: most lunch items under \$7 and most dinner items under \$9.

And the dishes we tried featured not just beautiful garnishes and stylish

dinnerware, but the fresh, layered flavors for which Thai cuisine is known.

Start with the finger food:

The fresh spring rolls, filled with cucumber matchsticks, bits of carrot and rice noodles, tasted pure and clean. Whole leaves of Thai basil, beneath the clear rice paper wrappers, just made them sing. And, with a dip in the sweet, chili-flecked sauce, they were a perfect opening for a summer meal.

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Mai Thai's chicken mango is a sweet-and-spicy stir-fry of mango chunks and tender chicken strips served in the hollowed-out halves of a mango.

RUDY SMITH/THE WORLD-HERALD

## Pixar dishes up visual masterpiece in 'Ratatouille'

By CHRISTY LEMIRE  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"Ratatouille" may be the first Pixar movie that is so advanced, so sophisticated, that it doesn't feel like it was made for kids.

On a fundamental level, sure, children will probably enjoy watching the animated adventures of Remy, a plucky Parisian rat who leaves his home to pursue his dream of becoming a gourmet chef. There's some slapstick comedy, and writer-director Brad Bird, the mastermind behind "The Incredibles," keeps things going at a lively, engaging clip.

But there's nothing silly or childlike

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A roundup of movie releases from now till July 4. Page 3E

about it. The main character is experiencing an existential crisis: Stay with the family and safely sift through garbage, as his rodent ancestors have done for centuries, or risk loneliness, failure and death by chasing after a loftier goal? Heady stuff there.

"Ratatouille" is visually wondrous — lush and intricately detailed, in ways seemingly tailored more toward grown-up

tastes. It would seem that computer-generated animation couldn't get any better, but it just does.

The multitude of "Ratatouille" animators paid close attention to bits of our daily lives we take for granted: knife marks on a cutting board, the way raindrops splash on the sidewalk, the glow from a street lamp.

The animators also do marvelous things with perspective, often allowing us to see through Remy's beady eyes, as if we ourselves were rushing down a sewer or scampering underneath serving carts to avoid being squished.

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Shakespeare on the Green shifts to "Love's Labour's Lost." Review, Page 4E

## COMING SUNDAY IN E.T.A.

Chicago's famed Joffrey Ballet hits the roads of Iowa.

The Joslyn Art Museum is doing a south-of-the-border art swap.

Dead men tell no tales, but they do give advice in "Blaze," a new yet old Stephen King novel. Books



## Beautiful romance is tinged with sadness

By BOB FISCHBACH  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

You can tell that "Evening," a wistful love story dredged from the past, was directed by a savvy cinematographer who has almost no credits as a director.

**REVIEW** Lajos Koltai, a Hungarian who shot "Being Julia," "The Emperor's Club" and dozens of other feature films, will make you fall in love with Newport, R.I., and the beautiful seaside home that is the main setpiece of the movie.

He's a master at making late-afternoon light turn a dying woman's bedroom into a dream world, or at capturing the color-drenched coastline near Tiverton, Newport and Providence, R.I.

He is less successful at making you fall in love with some of the characters in this multi-generational romance, based on the novel by Susan Minot, or in making some wonderful individual scenes come together into a deeply moving whole.

If you like sentimental stories, though, he comes close

enough. Koltai has the luxury of a powerhouse cast as dazzling as all those coastline shots.

Ann (Vanessa Redgrave) is on her deathbed, and medication causes her to ramble aloud about a long lost love, Harris (Patrick Wilson). Ann's daughters, Nina (Toni Collette) and Connie (Redgrave's real-life daughter, Natasha Richardson), clash on whether to delve into their mother's romantic past. Harris is not among Ann's multiple husbands.

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Claire Danes, left, and Mamie Gummer are two members of the younger set in the multigenerational romance "Evening."

FOCUS FEATURES



Greg Packer has been waiting for days outside an Apple Store in New York City to buy an iPhone.

iPhone  
not just  
good; it's  
great

We have been testing Apple's iPhone, which goes on sale tonight at 6 local time nationwide.

Our verdict is that, despite some flaws and feature omissions, the iPhone is a beautiful and breakthrough hand-held computer. Its software sets a new bar for the smart-phone industry. Its clever finger-touch interface, which dispenses with a stylus and most buttons, works well, though it sometimes adds steps to common functions.

The phone is Apple's first foray into smart phones, which are really hand-held computers. Although the phone's minimum price is a hefty \$499, people have been lined up outside Apple stores for days to buy one.

The release follows the most frenzied hype we have ever seen for a single technology product.

The Apple phone combines intelligent voice calling and a full-blown iPod with a beautiful new interface for music and video playback. It offers the best Web browser we have seen on a smart phone. It has robust e-mail software. And it synchronizes easily and well with both Windows and Macintosh computers using Apple's iTunes software.

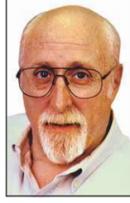
It has the largest and highest-resolution screen of any smart phone we've seen and the most internal memory by far. Yet it is one of the thinnest smart phones available and offers impressive battery life, better than its key competitors claim.

It feels solid and comfortable in the hand. The way it displays photos, videos and Web pages on its gorgeous screen makes other smart phones look primitive.

The iPhone's most controversial feature, the omission of a physical keyboard in favor of a virtual keyboard on the screen, turned out to be a nonissue, despite our deep initial skepticism. After five days, I was able to type on it as quickly and accurately as I could on the Palm Treo I have used for years. This was partly because of software that corrects typing errors on the fly.

But the iPhone has a major drawback: the cell-phone network.

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Walter Mossberg  
The Wall Street Journal